



# *NEWS RELEASE*

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### **EDWIN CLIFT NAMED MAINE'S 2005 VETERAN SMALL BUSINESS CHAMPION BY THE SBA**

Augusta, Maine – Edwin N. Clift, Chairman and CEO of Merrill Merchants Bank, Bangor, has been named Maine's 2005 Veteran Small Business Champion by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). "Veterans are at the top of my priority list," said Charles E. Summers, New England Regional Administrator for the SBA, "I applaud and appreciate the work Ed has done to support Maine's veterans through the Maine Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve." Clift was nominated for this award by Major Stephen Hatt, Executive Director for the Maine Committee for Employer Support of the Guard & Reserve (ESGR) located at Camp Keyes in Augusta.

Clift is the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board of Merrill Merchants Bank in Bangor. Under his leadership, Merrill Merchants has strengthened its commitment to veteran owned small businesses. Merrill Merchants is the leading lender in the State of Maine in providing SBA guaranteed business loans to Maine's men and women veterans.

A U.S. Air Force veteran, Clift plays a pivotal role in providing assistance to Mainers currently serving in the National Guard and Reserve as well as businesses who employ members of the Guard and Reserve. This is accomplished through his involvement with the Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve program. ESGR is a Department of Defense agency whose mission is to gain and maintain employer support from all public and private employers for the men and women of the National Guard and Reserve.

Clift will be honored at the SBA awards celebration June 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Sheraton South Portland Hotel. For further information on the award recipients or celebration, please contact the Maine District Office of SBA at 622-8274.